

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05 MCT-01
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 SSM-03 IO-13 OPR-02
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O R 161120Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8318
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLRVVA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 3328

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT MILI ASEC LE
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION: JUNE 16, 1978, 1300 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 3266 (DTG 141306Z JUN 78)

1. SUMMARY: TONY FRANJIYAH WAS BURIED IN ZGHARTA AS
NORTHERN LEADERS DIRECTLY CONDEMN THE PHALANGE PARTY
FOR HIS ASSASSINATION, AND VOW REVENGE. TONY'S LAST
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PUBLIC STATEMENT MADE CLEAR THAT BASIC ISSUE WAS HIS
AND OTHER NORTHERNER OPPOSITION TO EXPANSION OF THE
BEIRUT-BASED MARONITE PARTIES INTO THE NORTH. CAMILLE
CHAMOUN AND PIERRE GEMAYEL ARE BLAMING THE WEAKNESS
OF THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE MASSACRE. SYRIAN ADF
FORCES STORMED VILLAGE OF DAIR EL-AHMAR TO ROUND UP
15 SUSPECTS IN THE EHDEN OPERATION, BUT OTHERWISE EAST

BEIRUT AND MT. LEBANON HAVE BEEN FAIRLY QUIET. IN THE SOUTH, IT EMERGED THAT ISRAELIS ON THEIR FINAL WITHDRAWAL HAD TURNED OVER MOST OF THEIR POSITIONS TO THE BREAK-AWAY RIGHTIST FORCES HEADED BY MAJOR SA'AD HADDAD. END SUMMARY.

2. TONY FRANJIYAH BURIED.

AFTER HIS ASSASSINATION JUNE 13, TONY FRANJIYAH WAS BURIED IN ZGHARTA JUNE 14. SOME 20,000 PEOPLE ATTENDED THE FUNERAL, INCLUDING NOTABLY PRIME MINISTER HOSS, GENERAL VICTOR KHOURY, SYRIAN PRESIDENTIAL REPRESENTATIVE MOHAMMED EL-KHOLI, AND TRIPOLI SUNNI MOSLEM LEADER RACHID KHARME. PRESIDENT SARKIS HAD VISITED ZGHARTA BRIEFLY BEFORE THE FUNERAL.

3. ZGHARTAWI REVENGE.

SULEIMAN FRANJIYAH AND OTHER NORTHERN LEADERS ARE PUBLICLY HOLDING THE PHALANGE PARTY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EHDEN MASSACRE. A GROUP OF NORTHERN POLITICAL LEADERS FROM BOTH ZGHARTA AND BECHARRE ON JUNE 15, CALLING ITSELF THE "POLITICAL COMMAND ORGANIZATION," ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE CONDEMNING THE PHALANGE FOR KILLING TONY FRANJIYAH, WHICH, THEY SAID, WAS PRECISELY BECAUSE HE WAS A ZGHARTAWI LEADER. THEY ACCUSED THE

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PHALANGE OF DELIBERATELY TRYING TO PROMOTE DISCORD BETWEEN THE TOWN OF ZGHARTA AND ITS TRADITIONAL RIVAL BECHARRE (SEPTTEL). OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT OPERATION WAS PLANNED BY PHALANGIST MILITARY COUNCIL UNDER LEADERSHIP OF BACHIR GEMAYEL IN BEIRUT OVER PROCEEDING WEEKEND, AND THAT INTENT OF OPERATION WAS SPECIFICALLY TO ELIMINATE TONY FRANJIYAH (SEPTELS). IT IS ALMOST UNIVERSALLY BELIEVED IN BEIRUT THAT THE ZGHARTAWIS WILL RETALIATE BY ASSASSINATING ONE OR MORE OF THE GEMAYEL LEADERS - BACHIR, AMINE AND PIERRE, AND POSSIBLY ALSO THEIR FAMILIES AS WELL (COM-MENSURATE WITH THE LIQUIDATION OF TONY FRANJIYAH'S FAMILY). FOR NOW, HOWEVER, THE GEMAYELS CONSIDER THEMSELVES INVULNERABLE, AND, ACCORDING TO ONE REPORT, BACHIR GEMAYEL WAS SEEN DRIVING HIMSELF ALONE AROUND ASHRAFIYAH ON JUNE 14.

4. TONY FRANJIYAH'S POLITICAL TESTAMENT.

SHORTLY BEFORE HIS ASSASSINATION, TONY FRANJIYAH HAD GIVEN AN INTERVIEW TO THE SAHAFIYA NEWS AGENCY, WHICH WAS PUBLISHED JUNE 14 (INSTEAD OF JUNE 18, AS ORIGINALLY

PLANNED); DESCRIBING A RECONCILIATION MEETING WITH OTHER
LEBANESE FRONT LEADERS HE ATTENDED UNDER THE AUSPICES
OF THE MARONITE PATRIARCH TWO WEEKS AGO, HE SAID, "I
WAS AGAINST PARTY EXPANSION IN THE (NORTHERN) REGION.
THOSE TO WHOM MY REMARKS WERE DIRECTED BECAME VERY
ANGRY AND MADE A FUSS BEFORE I COULD COMPLETE MY
STATEMENT. I SAID I WAS AGAINST THE EXPANSION OF
PARTIES BECAUSE I KNEW THAT IT WAS AIMED AT TAKING
CONTROL OF LEBANON, ALL OF LEBANON . . . LEBANON BY
ITS NATURE IS BUILT ON THE CONCEPT OF FAMILY RULE,
NOT PARTY RULE. NEVER HAVE LEBANESE PARTIES BEEN
ABLE TO TAKE OVER THE GOVERNMENT IN LEBANON. FURTHER-
MORE, WHAT WE CALL PARTIES IN LEBANON ARE NOT REALLY
PARTIES. EVERY PARTY IN LEBANON IS A FAMILY PARTY . . .
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THE PHALANGIST PARTY IS THE PARTY OF PIERRE GEMAYEL."
ON THE SYRIAN ROLE, HE SAID, "WE ARE SUPPORTERS
OF THOSE WHO RESCUED LEBANON AND SAVED US . . . I
DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW YOU CAN KILL A MAN AND THEN JOIN
HIS FUNERAL PROCESSION. IN AYN AR-RUMMANEH, WHEN
PEOPLE WERE BEING KILLED, WE HEARD A LOT OF STATE-
MENTS PRAISING PRESIDENT ASSAD, BUT WHAT DID THEY
SEND WITH THOSE STATEMENTS OTHER THAN CORPSES?"

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5. LEBANESE FRONT REACTIONS TO TONY FRANJIYAH
ASSASSINATION.

BOTH CAMILLE CHAMOUN AND PIERRE GEMAYEL HAVE
TAKEN THE TACT THAT THE TONY FRANJIYAH ASSASSINATION
OPERATION DEMONSTRATED THE FAILURE OF THE LEBANESE
STATE TO ASSERT ITS AUTHORITY. IN STATEMENTS JUNE 14,
BOTH CONDEMNED THE ASSASSINATION, BUT AVOIDED
BLAMING ANYONE, LEAST OF ALL THEMSELVES, AND RELATED
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THE ASSASSINATION TO PREVIOUS INCIDENTS. CHAMOUN:
"... THE PHOTOGRAPHS WHICH HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED
HAVE MADE POSSIBLE A MEASUREMENT OF THE HORRIBLE
RESULTS OF THE AGGRESSION PERPETRATED AGAINST THE
HOME OF MR. FRANJIYAH ... WHO DID NOT EVEN HAVE
TIME TO PUT ON HIS CLOTHES ... HIS WIFE A VERY

RESPECTED LADY, THE LITTLE ANGEL WHO WAS NOT EVEN
THREE YEARS OLD. ... ALL THIS CALLS TO MIND THE
PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE LATE JOUD BAYEH (PHALANGIST
LEADER ASSASSINATED IN SHIKKA TEN DAYS EARLIER),
AND MOHSEN FRANJIYAH (A FRANJIYAH ASSASSINATED TWO
WEEKS AGO) ... WHERE IS THE STATE? IF IT IS
POWERLESS TO ASSERT ITS AUTHORITY IN ALL AREAS,
WHY DOES IT NOT WITHDRAW?" PIERRE GEMAYEL: "...
A DOUBLE CATASTROPHE. THE FIRST AFFECTS EVERYONE
IN LEBANON, BUT CERTAIN PARTIES ARE TRYING TO
EXPLOIT IT IN ORDER TO DIVERT LEBANESE CRICICISM
FROM ITS ESSENTIAL CAUSE. I DO NOT KNOW IF THE
VIOLENT OPERATIONS WHICH PRECEDED THE (TONY
FRANJIYAH) INCIDENT SUFFICIENTLY JUSTIFY IT. THE
SECOND CATASTROPHE, AS IMPORTANT AS THE FIRST, IS
THE FAILURE OF THE STATE TO PREVENT THE INCIDENTS."

6. SECURITY SITUATION AFTER FRANJIYAH ASSASSINATION.

IN THE NORTH, SYRIAN TROOPS STORMED AND OCCUPIED THE MARONITE VILLAGE OF DAIR EL-AHMAR ON EASTERN SLOPES OF MT. LEBANON NOT FAR FROM BECHARRE ON JUNE 14, IN SEARCH OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE PHALANGIST RAID ON IHDEN. PRESS REPORTS INDICATE THERE WERE A FEW CASUALTIES AND 15 HOUSES WERE DAMAGED. SYRIANS REPORTEDLY ROUNDED UP 15 SUSPECTS. ELSEWHERE IN
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THE NORTH, THE SITUATION REMAINED QUIET AFTER SYRIAN ADF HAD OCCUPIED MUCH OF THE AREA. EAST BEIRUT WAS TENSE BUT QUIET, AS SYRIAN ADF TIGHTENED SECURITY MEASURES.

7. THE SOUTH: HADDAD PROBLEM.

AFTER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH LEBANON JUNE 13, IT GRADUALLY EMERGED THAT THE ISRAELI ARMY HAD TURNED OVER MOST OF ITS POSITIONS, NOT TO UNIFIL BUT TO FORCES OF BREAK-AWAY LEBANESE ARMY RIGHTIST COMMANDER IN THE SOUTH MAJOR SA'AD HADDAD. DISTINCTION DRAWN BY FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS BETWEEN UNIFIL ACCEPTANCE OF HADDAD AS "DEFACTO" LEBANESE ARMY COMMANDER ON THE GROUND AND HIS LACK OF AUTHORITY TO SPEAK AS THE LEGITIMATE LEBANESE AUTHORITY IN THE AREA WAS IGNORED BY HADDAD. UN FORCES DID OCCUPY NUMBER OF POSITIONS ON JUNE 13 IN FORMER ISRAELI ZONE, AND FRENCH AND IRISH CONTINGENTS OCCUPIED ONE ADDITIONAL POSITION EACH ON JUNE 14.

8. GOL-UNIFIL REACTION.

UNITED NATIONS, GOL, AND USG HAVE ALL INDICATED DISAPPROVAL OF ISRAELI-HADDAD MANEUVER. GENERAL SIILASVUO MET WITH GOL LEADERS IN BEIRUT JUNE 14. AFTERWARDS PRIME MINISTER HOSS DESCRIBED HADDAD'S ACTION AS "A DEVIATION FROM THE WILL OF THE STATE . . . THE ARMY COMMAND HAD ISSUED INSTRUCTIONS TO THE MILITARY UNITS IN THE BORDER AREA TO REMAIN IN THEIR BARRACKS AND ABSTAIN FROM ANY SECURITY DUTIES AS SOON AS THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE KEEPING FORCES ENTERED THE AREA. THE INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING FORCES MUST MAINTAIN THE PEACE IN THE ENTIRE REGION UP TO THE INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED SOUTHERN BORDERS, AND NO PART OF THE REGION IS TO BE REGARDED AS AN
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EXCEPTION."
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